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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Office, Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
Washington 25, D. C.

POSITION OF THE FRENCH ARMY IN ALGERIA (U)

ARMY Declass/Release Instructions On File

1. Current Security Situation

a. The character of the revolt in Algeria has increased in intensity since its inception in the Aures Mountain area of eastern Algeria on 1 November 1954. This is best demonstrated by the marked increase in the scale of the French effort devoted to its suppression.

"Comparison of French Army Strength
June 1954 to 25 January 1957"

	<u>Army Strength</u>	<u>Divisions</u>	<u>Regiments</u>	<u>Battalions</u>
1 June 1954	64,000	1	4	6
25 January 1957	340,000*	13	42	64

* Gendarmerie, naval and air elements bring the total French military force in Algeria to approximately 400,000.

b. During this same period the organization, tactics, strength and armament of the rebels have continued to improve despite substantial losses to the French. Army Intelligence currently estimates that there are between 10,000 to 20,000 armed regular members of the National Liberation Army (NLA) in Algeria who can draw upon as many as 30,000 auxiliaries or part time rebels. Behind this group stands the great majority

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of the Moslem population who, either because of ideological identification or intimidation, are ready to provide supplies, intelligence, and other forms of support to the rebel bands. The rebel arms inventory, according to a reasonably reliable French source, includes 30 machine guns, 200 automatic rifles, 1,800 machine pistols and 9,000 military rifles plus a sizeable number of hunting weapons. Other reports indicate that the rebels possess a few mortars and may have acquired light antitank weapons. The attack of 16 January on French military headquarters in Algiers was executed with two bazookas.

c. Despite the magnitude of the French military effort in Algeria there has been no substantial improvement in the security situation in recent months. The great influx of French reinforcements, numbering 128,000 men, between May and August 1956 led to French hopes that the Algerian problem could be resolved by the weight of numbers by late 1956. Although some progress was made in July and August in limiting large-scale guerrilla activity French hopes of early termination of the revolt were dispelled by an upswing in terrorist activity in September. The pacification program, while limiting the activity of guerrilla bands, has not eradicated armed resistance in the rural areas, particularly in the Aures-Nementcha area in the east, the Kabylie, the area south of Algiers and in the western and southwestern areas contiguous to the Moroccan border. In the towns, and especially in Algiers, terrorist activities have increased in tempo.

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d. The military problems of the French in combatting the Algerian nationalists have been compounded by the adverse effects of the Suez situation, and the Parliamentary difficulties of the Mollet Government plus a number of other collateral current problems. The use of Morocco and Tunisia as a sanctuary and as a source of supply to the rebels is expected to assume even greater importance as a result of the growing official support in these countries for the Algerian cause. The growing rigidity in the colon and nationalists positions was not improved following Premier Mollet's policy statement of 10 January which implied the development of Algerian autonomy but insisted that the French would not leave Algeria. A number of reports have indicated that the situation in Algeria will come to a head in the next few weeks. It is fairly well established that the forthcoming discussions in the United Nations General Assembly will lead to the calling of an eight-day general strike by the FLN. If the Moslems respond it is likely that French elements will react violently to such a move. Some sources have indicated that the French Army will support the "Colons" in defiance of constitutional authority and might even stage a military coup in France.

2. The Position of The French Army

a. In the past month there have been a series of reports pointing up the growing possibilities of the French military, in concert with French extremist groups, of effecting a coup to assume

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control of the machinery of Government in Algeria. The United States Consul General in Algiers reported in early January that the activities leading to the arrest of Brigadier General Jacques Faure, Assistant Commander of the Algiers Region, were symptomatic of the growing restiveness of the French military over the Algerian situation. Subsequently the Consul General has indicated that he anticipates the military assuming greater direction and control over events in Algeria.

b. On 15 January Ambassador Dillon discussed the Algerian situation with Lieutenant General Jean Ganeval, Secretary General of the Military Cabinet of President Coty. Ganeval minimized the General Faure incident but, while affirming the absolute loyalty and discipline of French officers in the rank of Colonel and above, indicated that "a dangerous state of mind" was prevalent among junior and field-grade officers and particularly noncommissioned officers. Many of these men are strongly opposed to further French retreats after the losses of Indochina, Morocco, Tunisia, and Suez and are in full sympathy with the colon elements. Ganeval believes this state of mind represents a matter of concern in case serious trouble should erupt between the European and Moslem populations. Similar sentiments have been voiced by senior officers of the French Army in Germany.

3. Estimate of French Army's Reaction to Events in Algeria

a. Considering the current position of the French in Algeria increased military control of the machinery of Government is probable.

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The military, which have been the prime instrument of Resident General Robert Lacost's administration, has become increasingly involved in administrative, as well as military functions. This has been manifested on several levels of Government. Major General Marie Gouraud, Commanding General of the 27th Alpine Division in Algeria, informed Army Intelligence representatives on 16 January that over 300 French officers are now occupying administrative positions in Algeria. Brigadier General Jacques Massu, a paratroop commander most recently engaged in the Suez operation, was charged in early January with maintaining order in the Algiers area.

b. It is quite apparent that a clear danger exists that, as the French military become more involved in the local situation in Algeria, it ultimately will cease to be an impartial agent of the Government and will come to identify its interests with those of the colon extremists. However, Army Intelligence believes that this danger is not immediate. While many junior officers and noncommissioned officers probably could be influenced to support violence on the part of the colons it is believed that the tradition of responsibility to Constitutional authority is sufficiently strong among the senior commanders to preclude any attempt to stage a coup as long as the French Government demonstrates its intention to maintain control over Algeria. The reaction of the military in event of a drastic change in Government policy involving an abandonment of Algeria cannot be estimated at this time.

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